PROMENADE

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE

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AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP
NEW YORK N.Y.

"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group is to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, and general Americana which comprise American folk culture; to conduct activities without regard to race, creed, color or social position; to cooperate with those who hold similar views." Constitution of the A.S.D.G.

STAFF
Margot Mayo, Editor
Freddie Wiedorn, Bob Trotta
Irving Friedman, Don Marshall, Dona Shepard.
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One of our subscribers writes: "Out here in Ohio we have been squaring it since I can remember way back. The only difference between us and California is that we always thought that dancing was mostly "to do," not to "talk about." Having just returned from a flying trip to California, we are inclined to feel that this is a harsh statement.

True, dancing on the west coast is showy, perhaps too showy for some tastes. A great deal of emphasis is put on costume. The men wear cowboy boots, frontier pants and fancy shirts. Real enthusiasts add studded belts, painted ties, fringed leather jackets and ten gallon Stetsons. The ladies wear full-skirted cotton dresses with petticoats, hoops and pantaloons. It makes a very pleasant picture, but "keeping-up-with-the-Joneses" seems to be an American disease, and there is a good deal of competition involved in dressing for a square dance. The local business men are not allowing any opportunities to slip away, either. They've taken up the square dance so that the majority of clothing stores have special departments for square dance costumes. Many stores deal in them exclusively. It is not unusual to see mother and father and little sister and brother, all wearing matching costumes.

But, for all of this show and splashiness, one thing cannot be denied. There is more active interest in square dancing in Southern California than in almost any other section of the country today. If you wished to, you could dance every night for a month and still you would not have visited all the groups in the area. The Palladium, Hollywood's ultra-ultra dance hall, where the top bands in the land can be heard, has square dancing every Sunday afternoon. It is led by Ralph Maxheimer. Arthur Murray holds square dances two nights a week, and even offers "individual instruction."

Perhaps the most laudable development is the addition of this kind of dancing to the Adult Education Division of the Los Angeles High Schools. This makes it possible for a person to learn square dancing and to proceed from the beginners to the advanced classes for twenty-five cents a year. We have done a lot of square dancing and we've seen many groups spring up and then die out. But there has never been sufficient interest to bring square dancing into the public schools in such strength. For this alone every square dancer in the country should give a lusty cheer for California.

There is more than quantity in California. There is quality, too. The people dance because they like to, and they really dance. They work hard at learning their dances and then put just as much effort into dancing them. There is honest pleasure and real enthusiasm. Perhaps they do talk about it a lot, as our subscriber says, but we think they may have something to talk about. We'd probably shout!

F. W.

A FOLKLORE PROGRAM

This is the continuation of the folklore program begun in our last issue. We have included a complete Promenade bibliography which will enable our subscribers to get all the details of the suggested dances.

The true essence of folk art is embodied in its flexibility. With our program as a suggestion, you may have presented an entirely different one, to meet your own particular needs. We would like to know just what you have done to fill out our "skeleton." Let us hear from you.

Narrator: In sections where dancing wasn't frowned upon, and where fiddles and other musical instruments could be found, the folks danced in various formations. One southern variant of the Double Quadrille was the "Tennessee Square."
(lights on eight couples for the "Tennessee Square.")

Narrator: While the country people of the Southern Mountains were dancing to Irish and Scottish tunes, the city-folk were busy going to dancing schools and learning the polished formal dances of the nineteenth century. Dancing masters had been teaching since the early eighteenth century, and by the time America could sit back for a moment to look for culture, the dancing masters were teaching not only dancing, but also etiquette and posture.

Narrator: America was growing up.....the Mexican War.....the Gold Rush.....the mechanical revolutions.....the Civil War..... expansion.....new states were added to the Union..all this was happening during the period from 1840 to 1890 when quadrilles were most popular. Minstrel shows were the fad and Stephen Foster was writing the songs which we all know so well. Minstrels took entertainment to far off places. Pretty soon everyone was singing Old Dan Tucker, Cindy,and Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair. The young gentlemen and the ladies in the cities danced Lancier's and other quadrilles and polkas and schottiches and waltzes.....and the chaperones sat back in the candlelight or gaslight and saw to it that proper standards were maintained. Sports were becoming popular on an organized basis and while the young gentlemen at Harvard and Princeton were playing football in top hats, dancing masters used such themes in dances. Society danced the Croquet, Polo, and Lawn Tennis quadrilles.

Narrator: The world was becoming very realistic. With the invention of the camera, it became possible to reproduce genuine pictures, not just drawings or paintings. Taking pictures was quite an ordeal, for the people had to sit very still with iron clamps on the backs of their necks, for as long as, in the early days, twenty minutes.
(lights on group seated in tintype picture pose. The dancers "break" and form sets for a quadrille.)

(continued on next page)

Narrator: And still America was growing....Even the West was becoming populated, and wherever the people went, they danced, and square dance calls took on the color of the regions and of the work of the people...and so you have a dance like Waves of the Ocean, which interprets the lives of the people.
(lights on dancers)

Narrator: The quadrille and the play-party game figures were incorporated into the Western dances, and have survived to the present day in dances like the following medley of cowboy dance figures.
(lights on dancers)

Narrator: The final dance on our program is one of the most fascinating of all American folk dances...the Running Set. No one knows where this dance originated, but it is believed to be very old. It is still performed in rural sections of the South in almost pure form. Here is the Southern Running Set.
(lights on stage, dancers promenade on)

Narrator: So the fabric of our history is woven and the pattern grows, repeats and is changed. This fabric, which is folklore, is going to be around for a long time. If we can create something that is good enough to be added to the pattern of folklore, then we have accomplished something sturdy and worthwhile.

(curtain)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The Fly.....Promenade, Volume V11, issue 8.
Lancers.....Promenade, Volume V11, issue 3,4,5.
Oh Susanna.....Promenade, Volume 1, issue 2.
Tennessee Square.....Promenade, Volume 111, issue 2.
Tuxedo Quadrille.....Promenade, Volume V1, issue 7, 8, 9.
Waves of the Ocean.....Promenade, Volume V11, issue 6,7.
The Running Set.....Promenade, Volume 11, issue 3, & 4.
Volume V, issue 4.

TWIN SISTERS

This is the other version of "Twin Sisters" which we promised you in the last issue of PROMENADE. The piano arrangement is by group member David Farjeon.

A "FANCY" INTRODUCTION

This was a favorite way in New England during the last century of getting the dancers from a square set formation into position for such dances as "Portland Fancy," and "The Fireman's Dance."

formation: A square set with couples numbered as in a quadrille. Couple One has its back to the music, Couple Two facing Couple One, Couple Three to the right and Couple Four to the left of Couple One.

music: "Portland Fancy," or any tune with a definite rythmic pattern, such as "Rakes of Mallow."

CALLS		MEASURES
Introduction:	1) Honor your partners	4
	2) Honor your corners	4
Figure:AA:	3) The two head couples right and left	8
	4) All promenade	8
	5) The two head ladies, ladies' chain	8
repeat from 3) with the two side couples active.		
Figure B:	6) The two head couples out to the right and balance	4
	7) Chassez out and form lines	4
	8) All four ladies forward and back	4
	9) All four ladies cross over	4

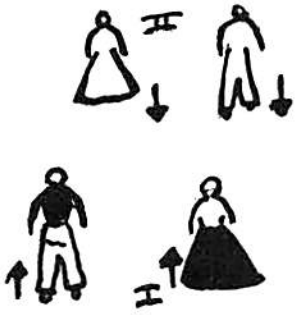
Description: 1) Each gent faces his partner, steps toward the center of the set, placing his weight on his left foot. He holds his partner's left hand in his right, while he bows from the hips. He begins his bow by curling his head over and forward. The bow takes four counts (two to each measure) to "go down," and four to "come up." At the same time the lady faces her partner and steps with her right foot toward the center of the set, placing her weight on her right foot and bringing her left foot to and behind her right foot. She courtseys, taking four counts to "go down," and four to "come up."

2) Each gent drops his partner's hand and turns to face the lady on his left. He steps away from the set with his left foot. He bows as described above, taking only six counts to complete the bow and stepping back into place on the seventh and eighth counts. Each lady faces the gent on her right, and steps away from the set with her right foot, and courtseys, taking six counts to perform the courtsey. She steps back into place on counts seven and eight.

3) Couples One and Two advance toward and pass each other, with the ladies moving between the

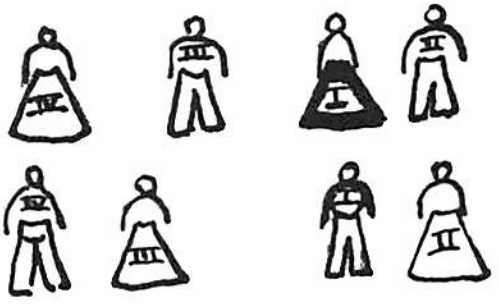
gents. On reaching the opposite side of the set each couple joins inside hands (lady's left in gent's right) and turns. The lady moves forward, counterclockwise, while the gent moves backward.

Couples One and Two repeat the figure to return to original positions. The entire figure takes eight measures; each part taking eight counts (two to a measure) to complete.



6) Couples One and Two move, respectively, to the Third and Fourth Couples. Partners have inside hands joined (counts 1-4). All step forward on their right feet (count 5) bringing their left feet behind their right (count 6). All now step backward on their left feet (count 7) and bring their right feet back beside their left on the eighth count. This is done with a slight raising of the heel of the foot on which the weight is placed.

7) All the ladies slide to their left, in front of their partners, while the gents slide to their right.



8) All four ladies take three steps forward, beginning with their right feet (counts 1-3) and close with their left feet (count 4). The four ladies take three steps backward, starting with their left feet, and closing with the right on count 8.

9) All four ladies move across the set, starting with their right feet, and stand beside their original partners.

NOTE: The set is now in formation for "Portland Fancy" or any dance requiring two lines of two couples each, with partners standing side by side.

A HARVEST OF WORLD FOLK TALES

Edited by Milton Rugoff
Illustrated by Joseph Low
Viking Press, N.Y. $3.95
1949.

Milton Rugoff's A Harvest of World Folk Tales is a variegated and voluminous collection. He has expanded the term "folktale" to include everything from Talmudic selections to Grimm's household tales. In the Foreword Mr. Rugoff explains that "readibility" was the major criterion governing his choice, and on this basis there can be no criticism.

Perhaps the most delightful of the stories are those which are the less familiar to the reader. The Latin American selections in particular, were new to us and for that reason especially entertaining. Many of the tales are so completely familiar to the average reader that there seems little reason for including them in this new collection. Certainly, since the Odyssey is required reading for most high school students, there seems no particular point in republishing the oft told tale of "Nobody and Polyphemus."

In addition to readibility many of these stories have great oral charm. The American Indian and the Irish tales, in particular, fairly beg to be read aloud. Though this collection is not meant primarily for children, many of the stories would be of use in a class room or or in a camp group.

A Harvest of World Folk Tales is not a scholarly book. It is rather, an easy-going collection of stories to be read for recreation. It is an excellent source book for the library of any folklore fan.

Joseph Low's illustrations are often amusing, but they do not, somehow, catch the spirit of the stories.

A.S.D.G. PROGRAM

The American Square Dance Group will present an evening of American folklore in song and dance on Saturday, May 13, 1950.

Quadrilles, longways and square sets, round dances and "Running-Sets" will be performed by the group, as well as early American choral pieces. The choreography, under the direction of Jerry Kree, will include interpretations of folk themes through the medium of modern dance. Tickets may be obtained at the Y.

Presented under the auspices of the Dance Center of the YM-YWHA, the program will take place in the Kaufman Auditorium of the Y, at 92nd St. and Lexington Ave.

RADIO NEWS

For listeners in the New York area, WOV (1280) has inaugurated a nightly program entitled "A Ramble in Erin." From eleven until twelve each night, except Saturday and Sunday, this program brings Irish jigs and reels, songs, and titbits of folklore. The program, written and produced by Pat Stanton, is charming and informative. Some of the newer music of the "old country" is not very exciting, but the genuine folk music is wonderful! And the informal narrative is witty and very, very Irish.

Another folk music program, one very different in both the material presented, and the manner in which it is presented, is Pru Devon's "Nights in Latin America."

This program is presented each Monday and Friday evening at five minutes past ten, over WQXR (1560 on your dial." Recorded music of the Latin American countries is played, and in cases where the music has not been recorded, Pru sings and accompanies herself on the guitar.

Speaking of folklore programs, don't forget the Oscar Brand show each Sunday evening at six o'clock over WNYC.